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Pence against expensive government takeover of health care

PALLADIUM-ITEM

Rep. Mike Pence, whose 6th District includes Wayne and nearby east-central Indiana counties, was the guest for a special "P-I Live!" on Monday afternoon.

The following is an excerpt from Monday's chat. To view the complete transcript, log on to www.pal-item.com/pilive

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- **Question:** What are your thoughts on the Obama health care reforms? Can they pass yet this year?

Pence: The American people want health care reform that will lower costs and make health insurance more affordable. But we don't want a government takeover of health care paid for with a trillion dollars in higher taxes and I will oppose the Democrats' health care plan on that basis.

- **Question:** Can you please explain and justify (your position on earmarks) in depth?

Pence: I made a decision to decline making earmark requests during January 2008 for the 2009 federal budget. Prior to that, I requested earmarks for roads, universities and public works projects that were submitted to my office by cities, town and educational institutions. I don't believe all earmarks are wrong. It was merely that after years of trying to reform the earmarking system from within, I concluded that I could have a greater impact restoring the budget process by declining requests and working from the outside of the system.

- **Question:** What are your aspirations for the future? Would you consider -- or are you presently considering -- any higher office?

Pence: I have no plans to run for any other office beyond the Sixth Congressional District of Indiana.

- **Question:** Don Bates, a Richmond businessman and GOP candidate for Evan Bayh's Senate seat, spoke over the weekend of the nation's dangerous slide into socialism. Do you share any of that concern?

Pence: As government expands, freedom contracts. As we see our federal government play a larger and larger role in our economy, and even our own health care decisions, I do share the concern of many that we are on a pathway which could send America into a future that resembles the socialist economies of Europe